

NEWARK, N.J.
STAR-LEDGERM - 238,123
S - 410,877

OCT 18 1977

Inquiry warranted

A decade ago it would have seemed highly unlikely and improbable to even entertain a notion that the CIA and the FBI would have coolly and deliberately fomented a civil disturbance as a field test of counter insurgency and guerrilla warfare.

But the highly disturbing disclosures of CIA involvement in domestic affairs — an area in which the intelligence agency does not have congressional mandate — and the illegal activities of the FBI in the Watergate scandal and civil demonstrations in the 1960s have put these once highly respected agencies in a dark, sinister perspective, a drastically changed light that regrettably has the negative effect of giving credence to highly damaging accusations, deserved or not.

The allegation that the FBI and CIA "insidiously planned and designed" the 1967 Newark racial outbreak has been raised by a Rutgers University sociologist who had a major role in the President's Commission on Civil Disorders.

Professor Sol Chaneles has undergone a radical change of thinking, too, in his long experience as a consultant to federal agencies on criminology and urban problems — social areas in which he is considered an authority.

He cites as a possible contributing factor the "pre-Watergate official draconian mentality" — the sincere belief of government officials in the 1960s that widespread guerrilla warfare was imminent and a counter insurgency operation was in the interest of national security.

Caution dictates that until there is substantive corroborative evidence to support this highly damaging accusation, it is just that and nothing more.

But the possibility the Newark riot was deliberately provoked as a counter insurgency experiment might well be the subject of congressional investigation.

The charges of possible complicity by two government agencies in a racial upheaval that racked New Jersey's largest city and accelerated its social and economic decline are certainly sufficiently serious to try to ascertain whether the accusations have substance or are groundless.

And it should be pointed out that Newark alone is not involved in this theory. If it holds up, it may well apply to other disturbances of that period.